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ABSTRACT

Results of a survey to determine the attitudes of student teachers toward 20 educational concepts before and after their student teaching experience are reported. The concepts were divided into three subgroups: attitudes toward interpersonal behaviors, techniques and methods, and classroom structure. Ten student teachers in fine arts as well as ten experienced teachers responded to pre- and posttests. Attitudes of student teachers were compared with those of veteran teachers to ascertain the amount of agreement on educational concepts. In terms of classroom structure, student teachers believed most strongly that their own punctuality and attendance were important. They also believed it was necessary to adhere to general school policy and that teacher and student evaluation of their work was necessary; their views on strict discipline were neutral. In evaluating techniques and methods, student teachers believed most strongly that field trips were valuable, but were neutral about lecturing and using various materials and teaching techniques. In terms of interpersonal behaviors, student teachers agreed that enthusiasm on the part of the teacher, reinforcement of students' artistic attempts, and rapport between students and teachers aided in the teaching of art. Scores of both student and experienced teachers were similar, although the classroom teachers' means on nearly all items were higher than those of student teachers. The conclusion was that perhaps classroom teachers need to discuss more of their attitudes about the importance of educational concepts with their student teachers. (KC)

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ABSTRACT

A SURVEY OF ATTITUDINAL CHANGES OF STUDENT TEACHERS IN FINE ARTS

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Rationale

It has long been assumed that the role of the cooperating teacher and the student teacher experience itself are of extreme importance to a student teacher. However, research into these areas is very limited. A planned program at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville to improve the direct supervisory skills of cooperation teachers is reported to have made a difference in the quality of the actual performances of the student teachers. Art educators such as Lewis (1965) recognize the teacher as the most important factor in the emotional climate of the classroom.

In art education, as in teacher education in general there is a necessity for the student teacher to conform to existing educational situations. However, several research studies have shown that creative individuals and art educators tend to be less conforming than the general population (Eisner, 1969). Therefore, the authors of this paper undertook to determine what differences, if any, there were between student teacher and experienced teachers' attitudes toward selected educational concepts.

Procedures

A questionnaire was developed by the researchers designed to determine the attitudes of student teachers before and after their student teaching experience toward 20 select educational concepts. These concepts were divided into 3 sub-groups for the purpose of analyzing the data: Attitudes Toward Interpersonal Behaviors, Attitudes Toward Techniques and Methods, and Attitudes Toward Classroom Structure. A total of 10 student teachers in fine arts responded to both the pretest and posttest. In addition, 10 experienced teachers of fine arts responded to the 20 item instrument, so that attitudes of the student teachers at the end of their student teaching experience could be compared with those of veteran teachers. Answers were recorded on a Likert-type scale.

Findings

For the sub-group, Attitudes of Student Teachers Toward Classroom Structure, the student teachers felt most strongly that their own punctuality and attendance held high priority. They also believed that school policies were important to individual teachers. Strict discipline remained in the neutral category.

Experienced classroom teachers tend to agree with student teachers' assessment of punctuality and attendance and school policies on their teaching. However, they felt even stronger than student teachers concerning students' evaluation of their own work.

Student teacher responses toward techniques and methods indicated that field trips were important and reading art journals was a significant task to be pursued. They were neutral on both tests on the use of lectures.

Regular classroom teachers tend to rank their responses much higher on every item in this category and felt most strongly that their teaching area allows for the use of a wide variety of instructional materials.

Examining the attitudes of student teacher toward interpersonal relations, they felt teacher enthusiasm, reinforcement of students and rapport were all very important.

Again the responses indicate that the experienced teachers rated the interpersonal behaviors much higher than the student teachers, even giving a 5 point rating to the item that enthusiasm of the teacher aids learning. They also saw reinforcement of students and rapport as highly significant.

Implications

Existing research does not adequately examine the adjustment or changes in attitudes made during student teaching by student teachers. The results of this pilot study with a small sample indicates that these student teachers had developed their strongest attitudes in the area of interpersonal behaviors. Their lowest means fell in the area of classroom structure. It might be that the university art educators and cooperating teachers need to look at these concepts. Or since fine arts student teachers are less conforming, perhaps it's best to leave them alone to individualize their classrooms. If one area does need attention, it is the one dealing with interpersonal behavior because cooperating teachers react even more positively here than do student teachers.

A Survey of Attitudinal Changes of Student Teachers in Fine Arts

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Educators in general have indicated that the personality of the teacher is a significant variable in the classroom (Getzels and Jackson, 1963). It follows, then, that a necessary first step in achieving the goal of better education for children is the production of better teachers. This is true in art education as well as for education in general. Art educators such as Lewis (1965) recognize the teacher as the most important factor in the emotional climate of the classroom.

In a study of preservice programs, Magoon, Davis and Jordan (1976) recognized the major objective of teacher education institutions as the "modification of attitudes and behaviors of prospective teachers

to approximate those accepted by the teaching profession." In art education, as in teacher education in general (Salzillo and Van Fleet, 1977), there is a necessity for the aspiring teacher to conform to existing educational situations. Schultz (1965) recognized that "The profession of art education derives its content from two distinct fields of human endeavor: art and education." There is evidence from a variety of studies, however, that creative individuals as well as individuals working in the visual arts tend to be less conforming and more tolerant of ambiguity (Eisner, 1969). Hoffa (1960) stated that "art experience is negatively related to measures of conformity."

Casey and McNeil (1972) studied the different attitudinal dimensions of supervising teachers and student teachers and found differences that could cause communication problems. A discrepancy in attitudes towards educational concepts between art student teachers and art teachers, if not recognized and ameliorated, might result in communication problems which could hinder the student teacher's acquisition of teaching skills.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The training of successful student teachers is a practical problem of great importance to the education profession. Existing research does not adequately compare a group oriented to creativity and their adjustment to the demands of the profession. Because art majors have been shown to be more creative and less conforming (Hoffa, 1960; Eisner, 1969) and successful student teaching has been found to require conformity to existing situations in the public schools (Salzillo and Van Fleet, 1977), there is a need to compare

attitudes of student teachers and experienced art teachers to ascertain the amount of agreement on educational concepts.

A comparison of the attitudes of art education students and experienced art teachers at the end of their student teaching experience would indicate the effectiveness of the art education program in transmission of attitudes towards educational concepts similar to those held by experienced art teachers. Magoon (1976) compared groups beginning and completing teacher training. Entering education students were more positive and students completing the education program were more negative in attitudes toward educational concepts. This finding raises questions as to the affective effectiveness of teacher training. Do the attitudes of finishing preservice art teachers toward selected educational concepts differ from those of experienced art teachers?

The information gained in this study will be of use to teacher educators in adjusting student teaching experiences. It will also be of use to cooperating art teachers and student teaching supervisors in adjusting student teaching to be more realistic in terms of attitudes currently prevalent in the field.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Two main research questions were stated for this study: Do the attitudes of art student teachers toward select educational concepts, measured at the beginning and again at the end of their student teaching program, make significant changes? And do the attitudes of art student teachers toward select educational concepts, measured at the end of their student teaching program, differ significantly from those of experienced art teachers?

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

For the purpose of this study, an anonymous questionnaire consisting of 20 statements concerning attitudes toward selected educational concepts was devised by the researchers. This instrument then was administered to 10 fine arts student teachers at the beginning and at the end of their student teaching semester. They were asked to rate each item on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The questionnaire also was given to 10 experienced fine arts teachers so that their responses could be compared with those of the student teachers.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The statements used in the questionnaire to determine attitudes of student teachers were divided into 3 sub-groups for the purpose of analyzing the data. The sub-groups consisted of Attitudes Toward Interpersonal Behaviors, Attitudes Toward Techniques and Methods and Attitudes Toward Classroom Structure.

The information obtained about subgroups is shown in the following tables.

Table I
Attitudes of Student Teachers and Classroom Teachers Toward Classroom Structure

Item	Student Teachers Mean Pre Test	Student Teachers Mean Post Test	Correlation Pre & Post Test	Classroom Teachers
1. Discipline should be tightly structured.	3.0	3.6	.50	3.7
4. Making lesson plans & unit plans should occupy a large proportion of my preparation to teach.	3.2	2.9	.20	3.3
6. Formal evaluations of the students have little value.	3.9	3.8	-.23	3.9
7. Teaching my students to evaluate their own progress has real learning values.	3.8	4.0	.26	4.6
16. School policies have little influence on my teaching.	4.1	4.1	-.06	4.5
17. My punctuality and attendance patterns have little effect on my students.	4.2	4.6	-.16	4.4

It appears that the student teachers felt most strongly that their own punctuality and attendance were important to the structure of the classroom. They also felt it was necessary for them to adhere to general school policies. In looking at evaluation of their students, the student teachers felt both teacher and students' evaluation of their own work were necessary. Their views on strict discipline remained in the neutral category even on the post test.

Comparing post test means of student teachers with those of classroom teachers, the latter have slightly higher means on all items but one, with the greatest difference being on item 7, Teaching my students to evaluate their own progress has real learning values.

Table II
Attitudes of Student Teachers and Classroom Teachers Toward Techniques and Methods

Item	Mean Pre Test	Mean Post Test	Correlation Pre & Post Test	Classroom Teachers
10. Field trips have little value for my students.	4.2	4.4	-.16	4.2
11. Using lectures and questioning techniques in my classes would tend to stifle creativity in my students.	3.1	3.1	-.34	3.8
12. My teaching area allows for the use of a wide variety of instructional materials.	3.7	3.5	-.13	4.6
13. My teaching area allows for a wide use of various teaching methods.	3.8	3.6	.18	4.3
19. Integrating my subject area with other areas (social studies, literature, etc.) is a desirable practice.	3.9	3.8	.39	4.1
20. Reading current periodicals in my area is of value.	4.5	4.1	.25	4.1

From studying the responses of the student teachers to various types of presenting materials, they seemed to feel most strongly that field trips were valuable but were neutral about lectures and using various materials and teaching techniques. However, they agreed that reading art journals was a significant task for them to pursue.

Again, the means of classroom teachers were the same or higher on all but one item than those of the student teachers. The greatest difference was found for item 12, My teaching area allows for the use of a wide variety of instructional materials.

Table III
Attitudes of Student Teachers and Classroom Teachers Toward Interpersonal Behaviors

Item	Mean Pre Test	Mean Post Test	Correlation Pre & Post Tests	Classroom Teachers
2. Enthusiasm of teacher aids learning by student.	4.4	4.5	-.21	5.0
3. Accepting ideas and feelings of the students is important to me.	4.1	4.2	-.01	4.6
5. Nonverbal communication is not of great importance in learning.	4.5	4.1	-.32	4.2
8. Rapport with students is important.	4.4	4.4	.75	4.7
14. Interpersonal relationships with professionals in my school are relatively unimportant.	4.1	3.7	-.38	4.6
18. Reinforcement of students is important.	4.7	4.5	.45	4.8

The results shown in Table III demonstrate the highest level of agreement shown by the student teachers with the statements in the questionnaire. They agreed that enthusiasm on the part of the teacher, reinforcement of student's artistic attempts and a good rapport between teachers and students aided in the teaching of art. No discernable reason can be seen for the decline in the scores on interpersonal relations on the post test.

Comparing post test means again of student teachers with classroom teachers, it will be noted that the classroom teachers had higher means on all the items. The greatest difference here dealt with item 14, Interpersonal relationships with professionals in my school are relatively unimportant. The scoring has been reversed on this item, which means both groups felt such relationships

are important. It also is of interest that item 2, Enthusiasm of teacher aids learning by student, received the highest ranking possible from every classroom teacher. It was the only item on the questionnaire to be marked this way.

SUMMARY

Existing research does not adequately examine the adjustment made during teacher training to professional teaching of a group oriented to creativity. This study of attitudes toward educational concepts made at the end of the student teaching experience by student teachers and compared to the attitudes of experienced classroom teachers of fine arts has pointed out some of the likenesses and differences existing.

The means on all items of the questionnaire were quite similar. Perhaps it should be mentioned that on nearly all items the classroom teachers' means were higher than those of the student teachers. The researchers have no explanation for this fact, but would appear to be consistent enough that perhaps classroom teachers need to be conscious of it and attempt to discuss more of their attitudes and feelings about the importance of educational concepts to their student teachers. It might be that teachers simply assume that student teachers will absorb positive attitudes when in reality a more direct approach is needed.

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